

**MHEC**

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Segmental Advisory Council
FROM: Dr. Emily A. A. Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs
DATE: June 3, 2019
SUBJECT: Suspending and Discontinuing Academic Programs

Please circulate this memo to appropriate campus personnel.

This memorandum serves to provide clarification regarding suspending and discontinuing academic programs. COMAR 13B.02.03.03 outlines the process in which an institution can suspend an academic program and discontinue an academic program. There have been no recent changes to COMAR regarding these processes.

Suspending a program

An institution may temporarily suspend a program and examine its future direction. Before suspending a program, the institution shall notify the Secretary in writing. After a 3-year period, the institution shall either discontinue or reactivate the program and notify the Secretary in writing. Since the program suspension may not exceed three years, a program that is not reactivated upon the expiration of the three years will be deemed discontinued.

During a period of program suspension, an institution has the opportunity to study its future commitment to a particular field of study. Additionally, an institution has the opportunity to determine whether the program should be maintained in present form, consolidated with other program offerings, or discontinued. The suspension of a program relieves an institution from having to submit a program proposal to the Commission to reactivate the program. If an institution, in its review of a program while suspended, makes changes to the curriculum that meet the definition of a substantial modification, a proposal for substantial modification must be submitted.

A program may be suspended for a period of time not to exceed 3 years. The catalog and other official publications shall indicate the official status of the program. New students may not be admitted into a program during the period of suspension. Currently enrolled students shall be given the opportunity to satisfy degree requirements.

The US Department of Education provided clarification to the Commission in January 2019 that students enrolled in an academic program with a suspended status under Maryland law are eligible for Title IV funding.

Discontinuing a program

An institution shall provide written notice to the Commission in advance of a program's discontinuance. The Commission does not review the discontinuance of a program by an institution.

If an institution definitively decides to discontinue a program (i.e., no intentions of "studying" it) and will be teaching-out students for a specific period of time, the institution should notify the Commission of the decision to discontinue the program, confirm no new enrollments in the program, and indicate an effective date when all students are expected to be taught-out. Once an institution has submitted a request to discontinue a program to the Commission, that request cannot be reversed. A new program proposal is required to reactivate or reinstate a discontinued program.

Please contact Dr. Michael Kiphart, Director of Academic Affairs,
Michael.kiphart@maryland.gov, with any questions.